

PRIVATE/Public Cost-Sharing

Both public and private land graziers own extensive riparian areas and associated uplands. The costs of deteriorated riparian areas and adjacent uplands don't stop at property lines. Neither do the many benefits of improving riparian and upland conditions. This provides the basis for expanding on a long tradition of private-public cost sharing.

Existing statutes, policies and programs such as the federal small watershed program, should be reviewed for opportunities to encourage creative riparian improvement cost-sharing.

There is growing public awareness of the value of western riparian areas, and of the costs resulting from their deteriorated condition. Hunters, fishermen, other outdoor recreationists and the businesses they support increasingly recognize they have a stake in the productivity of public lands that comprise the majority of some western states. They represent millions of potential allies for the approximately 30,000 livestock permittees who graze public lands and for livestock operators who only graze private land.

Fish and wildlife enthusiasts particularly are increasingly willing to help fund cooperative riparian/upland fish, wildlife and livestock habitat improvement projects. This opportunity could be enhanced by expanding state and federal challenge cost-share programs and dedicating a percentage of grazing fees to that purpose.

THE ultimate solution to restoring and maintaining the productivity of western riparian areas is to restore and maintain the productivity of watersheds. This requires special consideration for and emphasis on restoring and protecting riparian areas.

The preceding case studies and similar projects throughout the West demonstrate it can be done.

Rapidly growing public awareness of the value of riparian areas presents a unique opportunity for a new private/public partnership to enhance livestock forage, fish and wildlife populations, water quality and other values produced on western watersheds.



A growing number of individuals and organizations contribute labor and money to watershed improvement projects on both private and public lands.

*"To protect your rivers,
protect your mountains."*

**— Emperor Yu of China,
1,600 B.C.**